



CACATTA EOS.

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Rose-breasted Cockatoo.

Psittacus Eos, Kuhl, Nova Acta, tom. x. p. 88.—Temm. Pl. Col., 81.

Cacatua rosea, Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. ii. p. 5. pl. 25.—Ib. Ency. Méth. Orn., Part iii. p. 1414.—Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 183.

Plyctolophus Eos, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 269.

Rose-coloured Cockatoo, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ii. p. 207.

Cacatua roseicapilla, Wagl. Mon. Psitt. in Abhand., pp. 504, 691.

——— *Eos*, Less. Man. d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 143.

The Rose Cockatoo, Sturt's Travels in Australia, vol. ii. pl. in p. 79.

THIS beautiful Cockatoo is abundantly dispersed over a great part of the interior of Australia; both Oxley and Sturt speak of it as inhabiting the country to the north-west of the Blue Mountain range of hills; in fact, few travellers have visited the interior without having had their attention attracted by its appearance; and I saw it in great numbers on the plains bordering the river Namoi, particularly under the Nundewar range of Sir Thomas Mitchell; I possess specimens also from the north coast, procured by the Officers of the Beagle. A difference however, which may hereafter prove to be specific, exists between the birds from New South Wales and those of the north coast. Those from the latter locality are the largest in size, and have the bare skin round the eye more extended; the rosy colour of the breast and the grey colouring of the back are darker than in the specimens I killed on the Namoi.

The Rose-breasted Cockatoo possesses considerable power of wing, and like the house-pigeon of this country, frequently passes in flocks over the plains with a long sweeping flight, the group at one minute displaying their beautiful silvery grey backs to the gaze of the spectator, and at the next by a simultaneous change of position bringing their rich rosy breasts into view, the effect of which is so beautiful to behold, that it is a source of regret to me that my readers cannot participate in the pleasure I have derived from the sight. I was informed by the natives of the Namoi that the bird had so recently arrived in the district, that until within the last two years it had never been seen; they supposed it to have migrated from the north or interior of the country. During the years 1839 and 1840 it bred in considerable numbers in the boles of the large *Eucalypti* skirting the Nundewar range before alluded to, and afforded an abundant supply of young ones for the draymen and stock-keepers to transport to Sydney, where they are sold for a considerable sum to be shipped to England; and as they are very hardy, and bear cold and confinement extremely well, and are perfectly contented in a cage, we have, perhaps, more of them living in England at the present time than of any other species of the genus. I have seen it as tame in Australia as the ordinary denizens of the farm-yard, enjoying perfect liberty, and coming round the door to receive food in company with the pigeons and poultry, amongst which it mingled on terms of intimate friendship.

In a letter received from my friend Captain Sturt, he says, "The Rose-breasted Cockatoo is a bird of the low country entirely and limited in the extent of its habitat, never being found in any great number on the banks of the Darling, or rising higher than 600 feet above the level of the sea. It feeds on *Salsolæ*, and occupies those vast plains which lie immediately to the westward of the Blue Mountains. It has a peculiar flight, and the whole flock turning together show the rose-colour of the under surface with pretty effect." I have not yet seen specimens of this bird from any part of the Swan River colony, neither did I observe it in any part of South Australia that I visited; the eastern and northern portions of Australia are evidently those most frequented by it.

The eggs, which are white, are generally three in number, about an inch and a half long by an inch and an eighth broad.

The young at first are covered with long, fine downy feathers, which at an early age give place to the colours which characterize the plumage of the adult.

The sexes do not differ in colouring and scarcely in size, but individuals differ considerably in the depth of the tint of the under surface, some being much deeper than others, and in the extent of the bare space round the eye.

Crown of the head pale rosy white; all the upper surface grey, deepening into brown at the extremity of the wings and tail, and becoming nearly white on the rump and upper tail-coverts; sides of the neck, all the under surface from below the eyes and the under surface of the shoulder rich deep rosy red; thighs and under tail-coverts grey; irides rich deep rosy red; orbits brick-red; bill white; feet mealy dark brown.

The figures are of the natural size.